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Hopes of Mrs. Downey For Son's Release Rise

PEIPING May 27 (Reuters)

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Mrs. Mary Downey left here by air today for the United States with a glimmer of hope for the early release of her son John, serving a life sentence on espionage charges.

With another son, William, she flew to Canton. From there the Downeys plan to leave for Hong Kong Monday, hoping to get an immediate flight to New York. They live in New Britain, Conn.

During her eleven-day visit here Mrs. Downey was refused permission to see Communist officials about an early release for her son, who was imprisoned for life ten years ago after a plane in which he was flying was shot down over Korea.

But she said she found encouragement from a statement by the Chinese Communist Red Cross that China has a policy of leniency towards prisoners and early release for good behavior.